

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CONAKR 01114 291105Z
ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 USIA-15 /030 W
-----123808 291218Z /44

R 291023Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3184

UNCLAS CONAKRY 1114

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL GV US
SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THOMPASON BASKETBALL VISIT

1. AS EXPECTED NBA'S DAVID THOMPSON, QUINN BUCKNER, AND MONTE TOWE (TBT) WERE GREAT SUCCESS IN CU BASKETBALL VISIT JUNE 17-24, FIRST U.S. SPORTS APPEARANCE IN GUINEA SINCE 1975.

2. THEIR TASK WAS DIFFICULT: GUINEAN BASKETBALL WAS AT LOW POINT; MEN'S TEAM HAD LOST FOUR STRAIGHT; GIRL'S TEAM FACED IMPORTANT MATCHES. TBT SELFLESSLY DRILLED AND SCRIMMAGED WITH GUINEANS ONCE OR TWICE DAILY UNTIL IMPROVEMENT WAS VISIBLE. TBT WON OVER NOT ONLY PLAYERS, COACHES AND OFFICIALS BUT ALSO CAME 500 SPECTATORS DAILY WITH SUPERSTAR NBA TECHNIQUE, HIGH SPIRITS, AND GENUINE FRIENDLINESS. CONAKRY WAS A BUZZ ABOUT "THE AMERICANS"; TBT UPSTAGED NICELY THE START OF SOVIET-GUINEAN YOUTH WEEK AND, ACCORDING TO GUINEAN BASKETBALL FEDERATION, INFUSED NEW LIFE INTO THE SPORT. THOMPSON BECAME VIRTUAL LEGEND AMONG SPORTS-MINDED YOUNGSTERS.

3. VISIT GAVE EMBASSY EXCELLENT AND POSITIVE EXPOSURE TO GOG SPORTS SECTOR AND OTHER FRESH CONTACTS. CHARGE AND TBT HOSTED RECEPTION JUNE 18 WHICH DREW ABOUT 40 GUINEAN SPORTS FIGURES, HEADED BY ALPHA SOW, CHEF DE CABINET OF YOUTH-SPORTS MINISTER. LUNCH AT PAO'S HOUSE DREW OTHER OFFICIALS.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CONAKR 01114 291105Z

TBT WERE INTRODUCED TO CROWD AT PEOPLES PALACE AFRICAN BALLET EVENING JUNE 22. ARRIVAL RATED GUINEAN RADIO COVERAGE. TBT WERE FIRST FOREIGN ATHLETES TO BREAK INTO MONTH-OLD GUINEAN TV, WITH 20 MINUTES DEMONSTRATION AND INTERVIEW PROBABLY WATCHED BY MOST OF GUINEA'S 1500 TV SET OWNERS, MOSTLY ELITE OFFICIALS AND THEIR FAMILIES. PROGRAM WAS RUN ON VTR FOR PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE ON JUNE 24. TBT

ALSO GAVE INTERVIEWS TO "HOROYA" AND "GUINEE-SPORT".
ALPHA SOW PRESENTED TBT WITH OFFICIAL GOG COMMENDATIONS AT
VISIT'S END. ONE HIGHLIGHT WAS PRESENTATION OF SPORTS
EQUIPMENT-- BASKEJALLS, SHOES BY THOMPSON AND JERSEYS,
SHORTS, INSTRUCTION BOOKS -- TO SPORTS MINISTRY UNDER
U.S. GUINEA SELF HELP AGREEMENT. FOUR FILMS, INCLUDING
NBA ALL-STAR GAME AND NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP, ALSO MADE TRE-
MENDOUS IMPACT ON VIEWERS AT RECEPTION AND DAILY AT
STADIUM AFTER PRACTICE.

4. TBT WERE MODEST, RELAXED PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE DIP-
LOMATS AS WELL AS AWESOME COURT TALENTS; THEY INSPIRED
BOTH RESPECT AND AFFECTION. BOTH MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAMS
CAME TO THE AIRPORT TO SEE THEM OFF. GUINEANS COMPLAINED
OVER AND OVER THAT WEEK'S VISIT WAS NOT TIME ENOUGH.

5. IN RETROSPECT, TBT WERE PROBABLY OVERPROGRAMMED
SLIGHTLY. GUINEANS WERE EAGER TO PROFIT FROM THEIR STAY
AND WANTED ONE OR TWO PRACTICES A DAY. JET LAG, ADJUSTMENT
TO HOT HUMID CLIMATE, AND DAILY PRACTICES TOOK THEIR TOLL.
TO GET REST, TBT HAD TO CANCEL SUNDAY TOUR OF AFRICAN
CHURCHES AND OUTING TO SIFRA. SOME GOG IDEOLOGICAL BAR-
RIERS REMAINED IN PLACE. TBT NEVER DID MEET THE SPORTS
MINISTER (WHO WAS AWAY AT A TUNIS FOOTBALL MATCH FOR PART
OF STAY), OFF-HOURS FRATERNIZATION WITH PLAYERS (WHO WERE IN UNI-
VERSITY EXAM WEEK) WAS REPORTEDLY HINDERED BY ORDER OF
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CONAKR 01114 291105Z

MAMADI KEITA, EDUCATION-CULTURE-DOMAIN MINISTER. LANGUAGE
BARRIER INTERFERED BECAUSE AVAILABLE USIS TRANSLATOR WAS
NOT ENTIRELY ADEQUATE.

6. BASKETBALL FEDERATION AND MINISTRY OF YOUTH (AT
LEAST MIDDLE LEVELS) URGED EMBASSY TO TRY ARRANGE TWO
FOLLOW-ON STEPS: (1) GET FULL-TIME AMERICAN COACH TO TRAIN
GUINEAN NATIONAL BASKETBALL TEAMS IN CONAKRY
FOR SAY, 4-6 MONTHS; (2) ARRANGE TOUR OF U.S. BY GUINEAN
NATIONAL WOMEN'S TEAM. HIGHER-LEVEL IDEOLOGUES
MAY OR MAY NOT BE AS ENTHUSIASTIC; BUT TBT HAVING
BROKEN MANY BARRIERS, CU MAY WISH CONSIDER AND ADVISE ON
POSSIBILITY OF ONE OR BOTH STEPS IN FY 1978.
MAINLAND

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, ATHLETIC PRESENTATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CONAKR01114
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770232-0024
Format: TEL
From: CONAKRY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977068/aaaaagyy.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e6083a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2236940
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVALUATION OF THOMPASON BASKETBALL VISIT
TAGS: SCUL, GV, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e6083a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009